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A CHALLENGE TO CHRISTIANS

IN

THE CHURCHES OF AMERICA

American Council

World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches

105 East 22d Street, New York City

The Call to the Churches

THE CHURCHES AND THE GREAT WAR

Europe's tragedy disclosed the essential paganism of modern international relations. For decades her statesmen and citizens had been definitely preparing for conflict. Had the churches of Europe and America done their duty in finding Christian ways of settling international difficulties, and of promoting international confidence and good will? For decades a few pacifists had proposed judicial methods for solving difficulties between nations. What support did the churches give to these proposals and efforts?

IDEALS OF IMPERIALISM

War talk is developing in the United States. Threatening words and defiant looks are being hurled across the Atlantic and the Pacific. World conquest and control, through lavish use of "booms and dollars," are being urged by American imperialistic expansionists. Consider a few recent utterances:

"World Empire," says the *Seven Seas,* the organ of the Army and Navy League, "is the only logical and natural aim of a nation. The true militarist believes that pacificism is the masculine and humanitarianism is the feminine manifestation of national degeneracy. It is the absolute right of a nation to live to its fullest intensity, to expand, to found colonies, to get richer and richer by any proper means, such as armed conquest, commerce and diplomacy."

"All nations are and must be selfish," writes the Washington *Herald.* "At the close of the present struggle we shall be in a position in all respects but arms and the will to arm to control the destinies of the terrestrial globe. On the other hand, the European nations, impoverished financially and with their resources of 'cannon food' materially depleted, will not only be armed to the teeth, but will have the immense reserves of spiritual vigor that war always begets. We shall look to them very much as a fat, white caterpillar does to a party of hungry ants.

"The struggle from which we will not be permitted to stand aside may not, and probably will not, come for fifty years, but it will come, and fifty years is little time in which to prepare for it.

"We shall dispute this leadership either with Britain or Germany, as the case may be, when the opportunity presents itself. That is why we have kept out of the struggle. It is to our advantage that our potential rivals shall weaken each other as much as possible. This is what all of our apostles of preparedness have in their hearts; and all the talk that our post-prandial orators and statesmen put forth about our objects being purely defensive and our having no interests in the eastern hemisphere, and so on, is just so much hypocritical balderdash. We desire to be a great nation and to have our 'place in the sun,' which is just a synonym for 'bossing the show,' and though we are not so truculent or so objectionable about it, our aspirations in this respect are not a whit different from those that Germany has published broadcast to the world.

"Great Britain and the United States going hand-in-hand to lead the world into a warless era is only a beautiful dream. Bombs and dollars are the only things that count to-day. We have plenty of one. Let us lay in a good supply of the other and blast a path to world leadership as soon as an opportunity presents itself."

"Japan has beaten China," writes the *Evening Journal* of New York, "has beaten Russia, and does not doubt that she can beat the United States.

"Japan knows that she is to fight us some day, and this is her chance. Europe could not interfere, if Europe wanted to. England, with her big fleet, could not do less than wish good luck to Japan, her ally—Japan could reasonably demand that England do more.

"All the nations in Europe hate us; big fleet owners and owners of trained armies hate us. Some hate us because we have supplied weapons and lent money to others. Others hate us because we have not done everything that we were told to do. In a word, Japan knows that she is ready for war and we are not. Therefore Japan is insistent and insolent, and will become more insolent and more insistent as our complications increase.

"Japan is ready now. Japan has two million men trained to fight now, and weapons with which they can be armed at a moment's notice."

"There will be war with Japan within five years unless we prepare," Senator Towne is reported to have said in a recent address.

"The undercurrent here in Washington against the Japanese," writes the Washington correspondent of the New York *Evening Post,* "is usually to be traced to navy circles. It is astonishing how many people in high position one meets here who think that a conflict with Japan is inevitable."

The foregoing sentences doubtless represent the views of extremists, but they do immeasurable harm and many of our most responsible leaders are profoundly anxious. The world they see is a world of warring nations. The strong prevail and prosper. The weak are doomed. We are loudly told that Europe's war should be our warning and that America's only hope for security and peace in this warring world is to be even better prepared for war than all possible assailants.

IDEALS OF CHRISTIAN INTERNATIONALISM

Compare with the above clamorous demands that America shall adopt a policy of militaristic imperialism the no less insistent demands of Christian leaders that America shall adopt a Christian policy of international good-will.

"We deny that self-preservation and self-aggrandizement are the first laws of political life, and that there is nothing higher than the state. So long as international politics is debased by selfishness and cunning and intrigue, so long will the life of the world be bound in shallows and in miseries. The Christianization of international relations is the supreme task assigned in our century to forward looking men.

"In waging war upon war we must remove the causes of war, race prejudices, national antagonisms, commercial rivalries, religious animosities, and political injustices. The exploitation of backward peoples, the wringing of concessions from incompetent governments, the lording it over helpless populations, and threatenings and over-reachings of foreign ministers and diplomatists, haughty boastings of the right to dominate either the land or the sea, these are the seeds of war, and to destroy these seeds is the work of the Christian people.

"We have reached a crisis in the history of the world, and the momentous question presses, What shall we do? Forces are at work which, unless checked and guided, threaten to overwhelm civilization.

"The peril confronting us cannot be overestimated, and the first step toward coping with it is understanding what it is. But side by side with the peril stands the opportunity of making a new beginning. Humanity has at the end of this war a chance to begin its life anew."

"The New Internationalism teaches the equal right of all nations and races, small and great, to share in the world's resources, and in opportunity for free development, for expanding life. The human race is one and essentially indivisible. Its groups are indeed natural products of its history, but they are not independent in any absolute sense. The real welfare of all is bound up in that of each. We constitute a family of nations—an international brotherhood. We are members one of another, and none, however powerful, may ignore the rights and welfare of the rest, however small and weak."

"Against the pernicious doctrine that a sovereign state is irresponsible, because there is no higher power to which it owes allegiance, the Church must assert uncompromisingly that above all kingdoms is the Kingdom of God."

"Real internationalism, actual world-organization, can never come and abide so long as men believe that outward force is ultimate arbiter. Men must be awakened to the fact that spiritual forces are supreme."

"Surely we of all men ought to stand for the great conviction that there is only one race, and that is the human race."

To the above quotations from speakers at the Garden City Conference of the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches, we add the splendid utterance of President Woodrow Wilson in his notable address at Mobile. He was speaking, it is true, with Latin-American nations in view, but his words apply with equal truth and force to our relations with every nation.

"We must prove ourselves their friends and champions upon terms of equality and honor. You cannot be friends upon any other terms than upon the terms of equality. You cannot be friends

at all except upon terms of honor, and we must show ourselves friends by comprehending their interest, whether it squares with our interest or not. It is a very perilous thing to determine the foreign policy of a nation in the terms of material interest. It not only is unfair to those with whom you are dealing, but it is degrading upon the part of your own actions.

"Human rights, national integrity and opportunity, as against material interests—that is the issue which we now have to face."

TWO CONFLICTING IDEALS

Here we have two distinct ideals held before the American people. Both seek national security, prosperity and world leadership. The one is pagan, appealing to national selfishness and relying upon brute force; the other is Christian, appealing to the sense of right and reason and relying upon good-will and justice. The one exalts might; the other right. The one glories in power and physical prosperity; the other prizes friendship, justice and humanity.

THE CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCHES

What part, now, are the churches of America to play in the immediate future of the United States? Are they to be an important or a negligible factor in opposing national selfishness, ambitions and injustice, and in establishing wholesome international relations? That will depend on their attitude to the pressing problems of the new times and on their ability to act together. The times challenge the churches to high and noble action.

If they hold themselves strictly aloof from international problems, if they say these are political questions with which the churches are not concerned, they will of course do nothing. The churches of America will be as impotent and as negligible in international affairs as the churches of Europe have been. It is indeed true that these problems are largely political. But have they not moral aspects which the churches can ignore only at their peril? Do they not involve moral principles for whose promulgation the churches exist? If, because of the inactivity of the churches, the tragedy of war should overtake America, would not the impotence and bankruptcy of American Christianity be loudly and justly proclaimed?

Equally profitless to mankind will be the influence of the churches if, in cowardice and fear, they merely endorse the policy of peace and security through reliance on vast military preparedness. They will thereby but play into the hands of materialists and militarists, and will avail nothing in restraining excesses or in subordinating military power to reason and to noble ends.

Mere opposition on the other hand to military preparedness and condemnation of the wickedness and horror of war, likewise will avail nothing. Invective, however fierce, denunciation, however strenuous, will be fruitless. Mere negative passivism and a *laissez faire* attitude to the pressing and growing problems of international relations provide no solutions.

THE CALL FOR A CONSTRUCTIVE AGGRESSIVE PROGRAM

Only as the churches of America positively adopt an attitude and a policy of constructive statesmanship, courageously endorsing and promoting those practical programs that embody in international relations the ideals of universal human brotherhood, can they make their unique contribution to human welfare. This constructive attitude recognizes and approves indeed the relative truths presented by advocates of each of the other policies, Aloofness, Preparedness and Anti-preparedness. But it insists that the pressing need is for comprehensive and constructive policies and for concrete activities promoting the establishment of a truly Christian world-order.

The **Four Weeks' Study in World Constructive Statesmanship**, with the Petition, issued by the American Council of the World Alliance, the Federal Council Commission on Peace and Arbitration, and other organizations and groups, seek to embody the

main principles of such a constructive policy and program. We hold that for the long future, policies and activities that beget mutual confidence and good will among the nations are of the highest importance, and that their early definition and adoption constitute our most pressing need. Upon these matters the thought and energy of our own nation should be focused.

CHRISTIAN IDEALS SHOULD RULE AMERICA

The military and naval power of the United States, however great they may become, must be controlled by Christian ideals and constructive policies. The brutal and selfish ambitions of those who would secure private and national prosperity, greatness and mastery by "bombs and dollars" and "would blast a path to world leadership" must be absolutely rejected. This can be secured and assured, however, only by the united activity and statesmanship of those who believe that the ethics of Jesus apply to nations no less than to individuals.

AIMS OF OTHER PEACE MOVEMENTS

The **League to Enforce Peace** aims at the construction of international machinery by which to substitute calm reason, impartial law and friendly conciliation for hot-headed resort to war. The **World's Court League**, the **Woman's Peace Party, Socialists**, the **American Federation of Labor** and other movements are all out with their peace policies and programs. The **American Federation of Labor** already has plans matured for an International Labor Congress to be held in Europe at the same time and place with the official peace conference of the belligerent nations. Many groups of peace advocates are organized and are working earnestly along their respective lines.

SHALL THE CHURCHES BE INACTIVE AND DIVIDED?

Are the Churches of America content to leave to purely secular movements the effort to improve the relations of nations? Are they content to do nothing as churches, in this world crisis, for the establishment of Christian international relations? While endorsing heartily every effort of other groups to do their part, should not Christians express in positive, constructive policies their high ideals of human brotherhood and seek to make them real by practical and effective methods? Each group has its more or less specific proposals and plans for world organization. Should not the churches of America and of the world co-operate energetically for the adoption of such policies and such actions of international justice, outreaching helpfulness and positive good will as shall incarnate the Christian Ideals and beget genuine friendship between the nations?

LET THE CHURCHES MOBILIZE THEIR FORCES

Has not the time come for mobilizing the Christian forces of America and of the world for establishing Christian Internationalism?

This is the conviction of the Commission on Peace and Arbitration of the Federal Council and also of the American Council of the World Alliance for International Friendship. But how can it be accomplished? Only in one way. **Churches and Christians must co-operate.** This co-operation the World Alliance makes possible for Protestants. Let every congregation in America take its part; let it establish a Peace Makers Committee; and let every church member study the **Four Weeks' Course in World Constructive Statesmanship.** Whoever finds himself in harmony with its principles should affix his signature to the Petition and ally himself actively with this great campaign for genuine and effective Christian Internationalism.

THE CHURCHES, THE ARMY AND NAVY, THE TRAINING CAMPS

For some years at least the United States will doubtless have an increase of its army and navy and of military training camps for boys and young men. Under what moral influences will the men be? The churches and all parents should ponder earnestly the following statement by Colonel John Van Rensselaer, a medical officer of the United States army:

"Medical officers are required to instruct the men in the nature and dangers of these diseases and the non-necessity of exposure to them. We cannot expect all of our men to avoid exposure by reason of any moral suasion . . . so we say to them: 'Be continent, but if you cannot, then protect yourself!' and we tell them how to do it."

"Venereal diseases," wrote Hon. J. M. Dickinson, former Secretary of War, "cause a greater sick rate than all others added together."

Similar testimony, suppressed by the censors, is coming from the armies of Europe, the evidence for which is in our hands. The situation is appalling.

Consider likewise the following by Hudson Maxim, urging, in "Defenseless America," enormous increase in America's defenses:

"The unpleasant truth should be realized that invading armies must, with other luxuries, have women. As a result they leave a large progeny—wrens in the nest of the dove of peace. Hence, inasmuch as soldiers are the pick of the manhood of their country, they are likely to do about as much toward securing the survival of the fit in an enemy's country as they would have in their own country."

Will the Christians of America insist that in our Army and Navy and military training camps the very best physical, moral and spiritual influences shall be thrown around the men? If they will then they must do far more than they have been doing. First of all they must know the facts and then they must insist upon an adequate number of chaplains, provided with an adequate budget, with suitable facilities for their work. But how are these to be secured? Here too, the only reply is **the churches must** co-operate.

THE CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Will you unite with us in bringing all American Churches and Christians into the volunteer army for establishing Christian international relations and the dominance of Christian influences in our military forces?

This Challenge and Call to the Churches is issued by

The American Council of the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship Through the Churches

The Commission on Peace and Arbitration of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

For carrying out the proposals of this *Challenge* every pastor should secure from the World Alliance a copy of the *"Manual"* and other literature which gives full directions and suggestions regarding the organization and work of local committees for co-operating in this world-movement of Christians.

The principles and methods of World Constructive Statesmanship should be studied by adult Bible Classes, Brotherhoods, Leagues, Women's Clubs, Home and Foreign Missionary Groups, Young People's Societies and Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations.

To aid in this study a pamphlet has been prepared — "A New Era in Human History," a Four Weeks' Course of Study in the Outlines of World Constructive Statesmanship, containing references to helpful literature and closing with a carefully prepared Petition.

Each church member should be given an opportunity to sign the Petition. For this the following suggestions are offered:

1. Let the clergyman at some suitable service make a brief statement regarding the World Alliance, and the responsibility and duty of Christians to do their part.

2. Let the local committee place in the hands of each member a copy of this *Challenge* and of the *New Era,* with the request that they be taken home and carefully read. (5 cents each or $4.00 per hundred, postpaid.)

3. The Peace Makers Committee should check off the names of those who receive the pamphlet at the church and later arrange that a copy should be taken to each absent member by volunteer workers, going two by two. An interval of one or two weeks should be allowed for study and signature. For those who do not bring in their signed Petition there should be a wisely considered "follow-up" campaign either by mail or by personal calls.

4. Let the Committee feel that its work is not completed until the *signature of every church member* has either been secured or refused. If each church in the United States will do its part, this Petition should be signed by not less than 20,000,000 Christians.

If this is accomplished, the taunt can never again be made that the Churches of America are not interested in world peace, or that Christianity is a failure because Christians have made no effort to promote Christian international relations.

For Literature on the principles and work of this World-Movement write to the **World Alliance for International Friendship, 105 East 22nd Street, New York City.**

This pamphlet
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